

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00382 241024Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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S E C R E T BEIRUT 0382

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

FOR NEA/ARN POPE FROM MOLINEAUX

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MASS, LE
SUBJECT: MESSAGES FROM SHEIKH BACHIR

REF: (A) 77 STATE 309432, (B) STATE 011804

1. BACHIR IS CURRENTLY VISITING WEST GERMANY. I MET
WITH ALFRED MADY JANUARY 19 TO DISCUSS REFTELS.

2. TURN-IN OF NLP TANKS TO LEBANESE ARMY. MADY
ESSENTIALLY REPEATED WHAT BACHIR HAD TOLD ME EARLIER.
WHILE IN WASHINGTON, THEY HAD HEARD FROM DEPARTMENT THAT
NLP WAS TURNING IN TANKS AND OTHER WEAPONS TO LEBANESE
ARMY, AND HAD CONTACTED CAMILLE CHAMOUN TO VERIFY STORY.
IN MADY'S VERSION, CHAMOUN LAUGHED OFF THE IDEA, AND
SAID "TELL THE AMERICANS THAT I NEED NEW TANKS." I TOLD
MADY OUR UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT NLP HAD INDEED OFFERED
TO TURN IN TANKS, BUT THAT FOR VARIETY OF TECHNICAL
REASONS (WHICH DATT HAS REPORTED), GENERAL KHOURY HAS
NOT YET TAKEN PHYSICAL POSSESSION.

3. M-16S AT CHEHAB BARRACKS. MADY SAID HE HAD HEARD
VARIOUS RUMORS: HE THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN A PROBLEM
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WITH TAKING POSSESSION OF THE M-16S ON THEIR ARRIVAL
AT THE AIRPORT, AND THAT GENERAL KHOURY HAD AGREED, BY
WAY OF COMPROMISING WITH MOSLEM OFFICERS, TO SEND SOME
OF THE WEAPONS TO THE MOSLEM CHEHAB BARRACKS. (DATT
WAS PRESENT WHEN AIRCRAFT CARRYING M-16S LANDED AND ALL
WEAPONS WERE SENT IMMEDIATELY UNDER GUARD TO YARZE.
ABOUT TWO WEEKS LATER SOME 600 M-16S WERE TRANSFERRED

FROM YARZE TO THE CHEHAB BARRACKS.) LATER, ACCORDING TO WHAT MADY SAID HE HAD HEARD, WHEN GENERAL KHOURY TRIED TO GET THE WEAPONS BACK, THE MOSLEM TROOPS REFUSED. I ASKED MADY WHY WOULD GENERAL KHOURY WANT THE WEAPONS BACK AT ALL, BUT HE AVOIDED A DIRECT ANSWER EVEN WHEN I PRESSED HIM. (OUR INFORMATION IS THAT KHOURY HAS NEVER TRIED TO TAKE BACK THESE WEAPONS.)

4. "DECENTRALIZATION" OF THE ARMY AND PRESIDENT SARKIS. I ASKED MADY, WHAT DID HE UNDERSTAND PRESIDENT SARKIS TO MEAN WHEN HE DISCUSSED "DECENTRALIZATION" OF THE ARMY WITH THE THREE GEMAYELS RECENTLY. MADY WAS COMPLETELY NON-SPECIFIC AND DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE ANY DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT AT ALL, EXCEPT THAT HE THOUGHT THERE OUGHT TO BE MANY SMALLER GARRISONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY RATHER THAN A FEW LARGE ONES, AND THAT THERE WOULD NEVERTHELESS BE A SINGLE CENTRAL ARMY COMMAND. (THE CONCEPT OF RELOCATING SOME OF THE TRADITIONAL BARRACKS TO NEW AREAS HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN REPORTED BY DATT, BUT THESE NEW BARRACKS WILL STILL BE UNDER CENTRALIZED COMMAND.)

5. I DELIBERATELY TOLD MADY THAT I WAS ASKING HIM ABOUT THESE THINGS BECAUSE BOUHABIB HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND WAS PASSING ALONG THESE STORIES CRITICAL OF THE ARMY FROM HIMSELF AND BACHIR.

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I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE CERTAINLY INTERESTED IN WHAT HAPPENED TO AMERICAN WEAPONS IN LEBANON AND THAT IT WAS OUR JOB TO GET THE BEST INFORMATION POSSIBLE.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH I PRESSED HIM VERY HARD FOR DETAILS, MADY DID NOT HAVE ANY DETAILED INFORMATION ON THESE SUBJECTS. IT SEEMS CLEAR TO ME THAT HE IS ATTEMPTING A SMALL DISINFORMATION EFFORT WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME DECENTRALIZATION OF THE ARMY IS TAKING PLACE BUT WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO SUGGEST THAT SARKIS' LONG RANGE INTENTION IS A COMPLETELY DECENTRALIZED ARMY ALONG CONFESSIONAL LINES, AS IMPLIED BY MADY AND BOUHABIB. I THINK MADY GOT THE MESSAGE THAT (A) WE ARE CAREFUL ABOUT OUR SOURCES AND VERIFY WHAT WE REPORT TO WASHINGTON; AND (B) ANY ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH AN ALTERNATIVE CHANNEL TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, CIRCUMVENTING THIS EMBASSY, WILL BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF HIS OWN INTERESTS.

PARKER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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